



PRESS RELEASE

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MALAYSIA'S NEW ECO-TOURISM HUB IS HORNBILL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

PUTRAJAYA, 20 September, 2013 – The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) in collaboration with Tourism Malaysia is promoting the Belum Temengor Forest Complex and the Aman Jaya Forest Reserve as Malaysia's new eco-tourism destinations through the International Hornbill Expedition (IHE) 2013 in Belum Rainforest Reserve, Gerik, Perak, happening from 20 to 22 September 2013.

The Belum Temengor Forest Complex is reputed to be more than 130 million years old, the oldest in the world, and older than the Amazon forest and Congo basin. Meanwhile the Aman Jaya Forest Reserve is a newly gazetted Permanent Forest Reserve (18,866ha) – a 3 km width development corridor flanking the East West Highway along Gerik and Jeli that separates Royal Belum State Park and Temengor Forest Reserve.

“We have been playing a crucial role in the conservation of the planet's oldest forest and we are now proud to establish the site as the Hornbill Capital of the World,” said Mohamed Shah Redza Hussein, the Executive Director for Malaysian Nature Society (MNS).

He added, “There are 10 hornbill species that have been categorised as “Totally Protected” by the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, and all of these are found at Belum Temengor Forest Complex and Aman Jaya Forest Reserve.”

The 10 species are the White-crowned, Bushy-crested, Wrinkled, Wreathed, Plain-pouched, Black, Oriental Pied, Rhinoceros, and Great and Helmeted Hornbills, making the Belum Temengor Forest Complex an Important Bird Area (IBA) recognised by BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

YBhg Dato' Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, Director General of Tourism Malaysia, said “Tourism Malaysia is proud to be a part of this initiative because of the two-pronged approach of increasing awareness towards Malaysia's ecotourism sites and contributing towards its conservation. Such partnership will ensure the sustainability of Malaysia's natural resources and our economic growth.”

The IHE 2013 is organized to coincide with the migration period of the globally threatened Plain-pouched Hornbills found at the site. International participants, local birdwatchers and nature guides are expected to take part in the IHE 2013 which will have a birdathon for national and international delegates and a Hornbill Education Camp for young adults.

“This event will be a great platform for promoting the area as the hornbill hub of Malaysia and I look forward to this being one of the packages sold for Visit Malaysia Year 2014,” Dato' Mirza said.



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MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2012, Malaysia registered 25 million tourist arrivals and RM60.6 billion in tourist receipts, placing the country firmly as the 10th most popular tourism destination in the world.

In 2014, Malaysia will celebrate its fourth **VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR (VMY)** with the theme "Celebrating 1Malaysia Truly Asia". The VMY 2014 promotional campaign has started this year with a series of year-long special events and activities leading to VMY 2014. It will contribute to the Government's target to receive 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020, as outlined in the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) 2020.

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